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Chapter 31

Careers and Employment

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Background

As tourism is an important sector of the service economy and is a creator of jobs, there is a need to examine tourism education in relation to careers and employment. This is not to detract from the value of tourism as an area of academic study in its own right, but the vocational element of tourism education necessitates that it is considered in the wider labour market context. It is not sufficient to examine tourism education without considering the progression of individuals that undertake tourism studies with a possible view to entering employment and developing their careers in the industry. Furthermore, given the amount of employment opportunities available in the various tourism sectors and the ability of tourism development to generate jobs, tourism education is often the starting point in the training and development of human capital to undertake these occupations. Therefore, tourism education is closely related to employment and careers in the industry from both an individual perspective in terms of their personal career development and opportunities, and an organisational perspective in terms of the supply of labour available for the industry.

Dimensions and Profile

In order to explore and understand careers and occupations in tourism, three key areas that warrant discussion. The characteristics of tourism labour markets, the nature of tourism employment and the dimensions of the tourism industry in employment terms. These aspects are linked, and they provide a picture of the magnitude of tourism employment along with the characteristics of the labour market that tourism jobs and careers operate within.

Tourism Labour Markets

Labour markets comprise individuals in any given population who are considered to be of working age. Labour markets can be defined in a number of ways including their size, skill level and the nature of skills, cost of labour, geographical location and mobility patterns. Any analysis of tourism labour markets is problematic, due to the sheer size and diversity of the tourism industry. The difficulties begin with trying to define tourism, followed by attempts to define tourism employment. Even when a sector is identified, there are considerable levels of organisational and job diversity (Riley, Ladkin, & Szivas, 2002). Tourism labour markets are dynamic, with many sectors being characterised by occupational diversity, relatively low pay, a high percentage of young people in the occupations, high levels of mobility and low specificity of skills (Riley et al., 2002).

Despite the diversity of occupations, a number of characteristics of jobs in the industry can be identified. Andriotis and Vaughan (2004) reviewed a number of characteristics of the tourism workforce. These are seasonal, part-time, female, expatriate/migrant, pluriactivity, and existing in the informal economy. Many jobs in tourism are seasonal, with hotels and facilities either scaling down activities or closing after the main season. Part-time jobs and a high percentage of female workers are also widespread across the tourism industry, and often surplus jobs are filled by a migrant or expatriate workforce. These in turn can have a downward effect on pay. Tourism may also create multiple employment, whereby someone may have a main job in a different sector during the day, but then be employed part time in a tourism job at night. Finally, the informal sector of tourism is characterised by such activities as beach vendors (Andriotis & Vaughan, 2004). These job characteristics may give a negative perception of employment in tourism, which affects the dimension and qualities of tourism labour markets.

Tourism Employment

Although employment as a concept is relatively easy to define as either the act of employing or the state of employed, or a person's work or occupation, defining tourism employment fraught with difficulties. The overriding problem with a definition of tourism employment is tied to the difficulties of defining tourism and the dynamics and complexity of the industry. Issues such as the overlap and strong linkages of sectors, the problems of categorising tourists, the mixing of tourists and locals using the same facilities, the informal economy and the lack of statistics that hamper the definition of tourism can be equally applied to the problems of defining tourism employment. Tourism is not recognised as a single entity in the Standard Industrial Classification, but exists in a number of different areas. For estimating tourism employment in the UK the Department of Culture, Media and Sport use the following S.I.C codes; 551/552 (hotels and other tourist accommodations), 553 (restaurants, cafes, etc.), 554 (bars, public houses and nightclubs), 663 (travel agencies and tour operators), 935 (libraries, museums and other cultural activities), and 926/927 (sport and other recreation).

Despite the difficulties of definitions, any discussion on tourism employment does at least need to outline the dimensions of the industry. One framework that offers a simplified view is to identify the different sectors of tourism, the different occupational levels and the different tourism jobs.

In addition to the hospitality sector (accommodation, restaurants and catering) the various sectors that are commonly agreed as being part of the tourism industry have been defined by Riley et al. (2002) as

- transport;
- tour operators and travel agencies;
- tourist attractions;
- conference businesses;
- tour guides;
- tourist information services;
- souvenir shops;
- relevant government offices;
- NGOs;
- educational establishments.

This illustrates the scope and diversity of the industry at the supply level, and essentially defines the areas of tourism employers. Key areas of tourism employment as identified by the Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (AGCAS) are defined as tour operators, travel agents (retail and business) ground handlers, tourist boards (national and regional) local authorities, tourism information centres and tourism consultancies.

Occupational levels have been broadly defined by Cooper (1991) as operative, craft, supervisory and management, with the skill levels as unskilled, semiskilled and skilled. There is a dominance of the operative, craft and supervisory levels in many tourism occupations that often hampers career development (Cooper, Fletcher, Gilbert, Shepherd, & Wanhill, 1998).

The classification and identification of occupational classifications is a complex activity in general terms (Jones & McMillan, 2001). In relation to tourism, the list of occupations is seemingly endless. Two early classifications of tourism jobs are provided by Airey and Nightingale (1981), and examples of occupations given by Gunn (1998). Airey and Frontistis (1997) identify a comprehensive list of tourism jobs which includes hotel manager, hotel receptionist, chef, restaurant owner, airline pilot, airline stewards, coach driver, taxi driver, tourist information officer, travel agent, and tour guide. There are inherent problems in classifying jobs that go beyond the remit of the discussion here, but can be found in Riley et al. (2002). What is important in the context of tourism education is that the relationship between jobs and education is central to the development of human capital.

The Scale of Tourism Employment

According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), the world travel and tourism industry is expected to generate 73,692,500 jobs and 3.8% of GDP in 2004. This is forecast to increase in 2014 to 87,450,300 jobs or 2.9% of GDP. On a broader scale, in 2004 world travel and tourism economy employment is estimated to be 241,697,000 jobs, representing 8.1% of total world employment, or one in every 12.3 jobs. Estimates for 2014 are that the total number of jobs will be 259,930,000 representing 8.6% of total world employment or one in every 11.6 jobs (WTTC, 2004).

Table 1: Travel and tourism industry employment 2004 ('000 of jobs).

Rank	Country	Number
1	China	14,787.0
2	India	11,404.0
3	United States	6,561.6
4	Indonesia	3,176.7
5	Japan	2,638.8
6	Brazil	2,263.6
7	Egypt	1,600.4
8	France	1,549.6
9	Spain	1,475.3
10	Thailand	1,453.9

Source: World Travel and Tourism Council (2004).

On a country basis there are differences in the number of people employed in the travel and tourism industry. The top 10 countries with regard to generating the largest amount (absolute) terms of travel and tourism industry employment in 2004 are shown in Table 1.

In Britain, in June 2002 there were an estimated 2,127,200 employees (including the self-employed) in tourism-related industries, representing 7% of all people in employment. (Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 2003).

Statistics for tourism employment are usually drawn from data using Tourism Satellite Accounts (TSA), and guidelines are provided by the World Tourism Organisation (WTO) for the development of National Tourism Statistics (STSS) and the TSA. Depending on the employment issues to be described or analysed and on the statistics available, statistics on employment topics may be organised in the context of TSA or they may be organised independently. Employment and labour statistics may be linked to TSA by co-ordinating and linking the statistical classification, definitions, scopes and reference periods (WTO, 2001).

While improvements in the ways in which tourism employment data are collected through the implementation of TSA are evident, the statistics on employment are not without criticism, and have been accused of being misleading (Leiper, 1999). A discussion of the ways in which tourism employment data is collected and interpreted is beyond the scope of this chapter, but TSA methods are fully outlined by the WTO (WTO, 2001).

Tourism Careers and Employment Literature

Despite the rapid growth of the tourism industry, the subsequent increase in the number of tourism jobs and the growth in educational courses, surprisingly little is known about careers and employment in the tourism industry. Information and research in this area comes from two main sources. The first is career information and guidance literature produced by governments, industry organisations and career and employment assistance services. Typically

this type of information provides a description of the occupation, expected educational requirements, training and skill development, salaries and career progression, and in some instances, job vacancies.

The second source is research by the academic community who investigate a variety of different areas related to careers and employment in the tourism industry. For example, Ross (1992, 1993, 1997a) explores a range of issues relating to interest in tourism and hospitality employment, including work motivation, success perception and job acquisition strategies. Specific to one sector, travel agency employment perceptions have also been explored by Ross (1997b). The attitudes to careers in tourism from a UK and Greek perspective has been examined by Airey and Frontistis (1997). Related to the theme of perceptions, Hjalager and Andersen (2001) explore professionalism in tourism employment, and Hjalager (2003) investigates the educational opportunities and dilemmas that higher education faces in considering global tourism careers. Petrova and Mason (2004) assess the value of tourism degrees as perceived by a group of UK undergraduate students. Employment in tourism in times of economic transition has been examined by Szivas and Riley (1999), and exploration of the movement of labour into tourism in terms of attraction to and satisfaction with the industry is further outlined by Szivas, Riley, and Airey (2003). Seasonality issues are identified as being problematic in terms of labour supply (Jolliffe & Farnsworth, 2003). A recent research area focuses on vocational identities and careers in the tourism sector (Marhuenda, Martinez, & Navas, 2004). Characteristics of the tourism workforce have been identified by Andriotis and Vaughan (2004), who also provide an overview of previous research in this area. Finally, new ways of recording tourism employment as a means of reducing exaggerated statistics about tourism jobs is put forward by Leiper (1999), and developing human resources for the tourism industry have been discussed with reference to India by Singh (1997).

Apart from research by McKercher, Williams, and Coghlan (1995) who report on the career progress of tourism graduates from Charles Stuart University in Australia, little is known about what happens to tourism graduates after they leave education. Increasingly, with universities keeping data and alumni and undertaking first destination exits surveys a greater understanding of what happens to tourism graduates might emerge. Tracking the careers of those engaged in the industry gives important information on labour market behaviour and labour mobility.

A greater understanding of career progression is evident in the hospitality area, specifically in relation to hotel managers' careers (Guerrier, 1987; Riley & Turam, 1989; Baum, 1988, 1989; Tanke, 1990; Ruddy, 1989, 1990; Williams & Hunter, 1992). Ladkin and Riley (1996) examine mobility and structure in the career patterns of UK hotel managers, using a labour market hybrid of the bureaucratic model. There are two possible reasons why research into the careers of hotel managers is more advanced than for other occupations. The first is the importance of the hotel manager job as a profession in the industry, and the second is that as a target job it is easy to identify and monitor over time. The route to becoming a hotel manager often has clearly identified stages. Furthermore, evidence by Ladkin (2002) and Ladkin and Riley (1996) demonstrates that hotel managers are committed to the industry and their movements in the internal and external labour markets can be easily identified. Further research in the tourism area would address the imbalance.

Career Theory and Concepts

Career theory is a broad term, which refers to a set of exploratory and investigative approaches used to measure and analyse the phenomenon (Riley & Ladkin, 1994). The study of careers draws from a wide range of disciplines including economics in the form of job search processes, organisational behaviour for the structure of jobs, personality psychology which links careers to jobs, and motivation theory in terms of job choices and motivations (Riley & Ladkin, 1994). Although a career can be seen in a very simple form as a set of jobs that take place over time, this hides the complexity of a career that contains direction, time, pace, motivations, barriers, the development of human capital and goals. Furthermore, careers take place within the internal and external labour markets and are related to the cost and mobility of labour, all of which makes them a complex entity to understand. A comprehensive review and explanation of career theory has been given by Arthur, Hall, and Lawrence (1989). This review sparked the beginnings of a debate as to whether or not careers are a separate and distinctive area of study, with accepted identifiable theoretical perspectives and methodologies. Clearly, career theory, as with careers in general, does not remain static over time (Swanson, 1992). Emergent themes include the interaction of work and non-work, work and well-being, dual career issues and changing labour needs, and the changing nature of careers. Recently, Iellatcchitch, Mayrhofer, and Meyer (2003) argue for examining careers in terms of career fields as a means towards understanding overall career theory. Managing careers from both a theoretical and practical approach is further explored by both Swanson (1999) and Yehuda (2003).

However, regardless of any debate on the theoretical perspectives of careers, one certainty however is the importance of careers and occupations to individuals. They contain both an objective element relating to career structures and a subjective element that links careers to the self. Furthermore, jobs and careers contain an economic and structural element which links them to the wider aspects of societies and economic development. These reasons provide a case for continuing to develop an understanding of career theory and processes.

Practical Aspects of Career Theory

All careers contain a practical element. Riley and Ladkin (1994) identify three elements of career theory that can be related to the practical aspects of careers. These are career development, career planning and career choice. Career development refers to the outcomes for individuals and organisations and covers mobility, job transitions, career stages, career compromise and withdrawal, and economics. Career planning is concerned at the organisational level with the needs of organisations and human resource planning and at the individual level with the relationship between individual planning and career outcomes. Career choice explores a person's choice of job and organisation, and includes the career decision process, career anchors and career paths (Riley & Ladkin, 1994).

Career development is an umbrella term for personal or organisational career planning. Much of the research in this area relates to measurements of career development constructs (Chartrand & Camp, 1991), career development techniques (Luzzo, 1993), career stages (Erickson, 1963; Super, 1957; Levinson, 1978), career plateaus (Veiga, 1981) and career

mobility and career paths (Driver, 1988; Gunz, 1988; Rosenbaum, 1979; Walker, 1992). The career planning literature either explores organisational needs in terms of planning (Bennison & Casson, 1984), and labour market analysis (Psacharopoulos, 1991; Adams, Middleton, & Ziderman, 1992), or individual career planning. This includes comment on the need for planning (Jennings, 1971; Hall, 1976; Edmond, 1989), success and satisfaction (Hall, 1976; Granrose & Portwood, 1987; Gould, 1979), variables that influence career planning (Korman, 1971; Greenhaus & Simon, 1976; Gould, 1979). The literature surrounding career choice is extensive (Lichtenberg, Shaffer, & Mariner-Arachtingi, 1993; Ben-shem & Avi-Itzhak, 1991; Osipow, 1990). Two of the most influential authors are Holland (1985) who explores personality types and their relationship to career choice, and Schein (1975) who developed the concept of career anchors, which are a set of criteria that you would not give up in your choice of career. Recently, Schein (1995) has explored career survival strategies through strategic job and role planning.

Given the variety of information available on the study of careers, a useful way forward would be to develop a framework for the analysis of careers in tourism. This has already been attempted by Riley and Ladkin (1994) who put forward a structural–technical framework for the analysis of careers that examines both the structural variables of a career and the behaviour elements.

Practical Elements of Tourism Careers

Set against the theoretical aspects of careers, as with any other industry there is a practical element to how people choose and develop their careers in the tourism industry. Three main issues with particular relevance to tourism education can be identified.

The first is in terms of taking a career decision to work in the tourism industry and searching for a job. The decision to seek employment in the tourism industry depends largely on whether or not there are perceived opportunities in the industry, and the attractiveness of jobs in the industry. Aside from the issue of the quality and level of the jobs, there is often no shortage of tourism employment opportunities in any given labour market. This is particularly the case in areas where tourism is developing as an industry (Cooper et al., 1998). Although little is known about the attractiveness of jobs in tourism, evidence provided by Hjalager (2003) and Szivas et al. (2003) indicates that certain tourism jobs remain attractive. Clearly, the willingness of people to consider jobs in the industry is dependent on other opportunities available in a given labour market.

The decision to work in the tourism industry is assisted by the range of information available to help individuals understand the nature of jobs and where the main sectors of employment can be found. The information sources include organisations devoted to helping people search for jobs such as educational career services, government employment centres and industry bodies such as the Association of British Travel Agencies (ABTA). In the UK, one of the main sources of information for graduates seeking jobs is the AGCAS. The tourism sector briefing includes an introduction to the tourism industry, the size, structure and current issues affecting the industry, who the key employers are, key roles for graduates and case studies of jobs (AGCAS, 2003). Books on careers in the industry are also available. For example, *Careers and jobs in travel and tourism* (Reily Collins, 2004). Increasingly, information on jobs and employers is provided by electronic sources. The on-line service provided by

AGCAS, www.prospects.ac.uk, provides services for a targeted career search, and for each type of job lists information on job activities, salary and conditions, entry requirements, training, career development, related jobs, case studies, contacts and resources, and vacancy sources. With many sources of information, the Internet is becoming the main place where individuals will search for career information and job opportunities.

The second career issue involves the decision to undertake tourism education prior to entering the labour force. The debate concerning whether or not a vocational education is required for employment in tourism is beyond the scope of this chapter and is discussed elsewhere (Cooper et al., 1994). However, it is possible to study tourism subjects at a range of different levels, some with a more practical skills-based element and others with a more academic focus. In England, the range of tourism education includes General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQ), National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ), City and Guilds, General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE), General Certificate of Education (GCE) A levels, BTEC (Edexcel Foundation) Higher National Diplomas, Degrees and Postgraduate courses. Many universities also offer the opportunity to study for a research degree in the tourism area at MPhil, PhD and Professional Doctorate level. The prolific growth of tourism courses and course content in the UK has been outlined by Airey and Johnson (1999).

The third element is the issue of career development. Little is known about the routes that people take in order to develop careers in the tourism industry, as has been previously discussed. However, some organisations do have fixed career development routes that take place within their own internal labour markets. Graduate training schemes are becoming increasingly scarce, and on many instances only exist within large tour operator companies, hotels or airlines. For example, British Airways has the “Leaders for Business Programme”, which is designed to train employees for a complete range of management capabilities they can apply across the business. This is a programme lasting between two and a half and three years, based on an introduction and placements.

An alternative career route might be to specialise in a particular role, for example, Information Technology or Marketing. Many tourism company training schemes are involved in “Investors in People” schemes. Often people gain experience in such functions in jobs not related to tourism. What is clear is that in order to succeed in many of the large companies in tourism is that a degree of mobility is required, using both the internal and external labour market. It is often this lack of perceived career development that dissuades people from entering the tourism professions.

Global Aspects of Careers and Employment

Tourism as an industry is characterised by international and domestic travel and is global in nature. Therefore it is important to consider career and employment in a global context. Central issues relevant to careers and employment in the tourism industry at the global scale are the importance of tourism employment, the movement of labour internationally, and job losses.

There is little doubt that tourism is a labour-intensive industry. The tourism industry provides a mechanism for generating employment opportunities for both developing countries with surplus labour and for industrialised countries with high levels of unemployment

(Cooper et al., 1998). The potential for job creation identifies tourism as a positive agent for change, resulting in governments using tourism as a development and regeneration strategy (Andriotis & Vaughan, 2004). Furthermore, in areas where other sectors of employment have declined, for example, in agriculture or heavy industry, tourism often becomes the main source of employment. As has previously been identified, the quality of these jobs is questionable, with a lack of higher level jobs resulting in a lack of career development. However, one feature of tourism employment is that while some jobs are directly related to travel and tourism and may suffer from the above characteristics, other jobs are produced as a result of the indirect effects of tourism. These jobs often do not suffer from the same characteristics (Cooper et al., 1998). Whatever the merits or problems of tourism jobs, and the difficulties in gaining accurate statistics on employment notwithstanding, it is clearly an important source of employment on a global-scale.

Linked to increasing globalisation is the issue labour mobility. Evidence on labour mobility from other employment sectors into tourism is provided by Szivas et al. (2003). Areas that are developing for tourism have to draw labour from somewhere, and depending on unemployment levels and the availability of skills, labour into tourism will either come from other areas or from other sectors of the labour market. With the move towards more liberalised employment opportunities particularly within the European Union, and with many global organisations such as hotels and airlines hiring from a global labour market, there are career and employment opportunities available in tourism that cross international boundaries. One of the problems with this movement of labour on an international scale is the recognition of tourism qualifications. Tourism qualifications that can be recognised internationally is an issue currently being addressed by the Education Council of the WTO. One certainty is the importance of language abilities for employees in tourism, and the ability to speak at least three major languages is often a requirement for employment in global tourism corporations.

A recent threat to the travel and tourism industry on a global scale is the issue of job losses. Belau (2003) from the International Labour Organisation (ILO) has identified that a combination of economic stagnation, safety concerns in view of recent security events, the effects of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and hostilities in the Middle East has resulted in a downturn in the travel and tourism industry that began in March 2003. Without significant improvements, the ILO predicts that 5 million jobs, representing 6% of the industry's total employment will be lost. The effects would not be the same in all regions, but countries experiencing the direct effects of the above would be the most seriously affected. The ILO also identify additional factors that could further affect job losses. These are that reductions in labour made in the short term tend to become permanent, as existing staff cope with the demand using new working methods and flexibility, and the modernisation of working methods. In Germany, TUI the world leader in tour operating, recently announced a US\$280 million cost-cutting programme for 2004, with the possible loss of 2000 jobs (Belau, 2003). As with many other industry sectors, downturns and job losses are always a possibility.

Tourism Careers and Employment: Issues and Challenges

There are two main challenges for the industry in terms of developing careers and employment opportunities in tourism.

The first is part of an ongoing debate about the relationship between tourism education and tourism employment. The fact that the number of tourism courses and the number of tourism graduates searching for jobs in the industry is increasing is without doubt (Airey & Johnson, 1999; Kusluvan & Kusluvan, 2000; Petrova & Mason, 2004). The oversupply of tourism graduates is further compounded by the industry, which too often does not rate or recognise tourism education. Evidence provided by Hjalager and Andersen (2001) and Ladkin and Riley (1996) indicates that employees with a dedicated vocational tourism training do not necessarily have more rapid career progression than those with less relevant qualifications. Furthermore, industry has criticised tourism education for not adequately preparing people for employment in the industry (Airey, 1998; Petrova & Mason, 2004), and employers are confused about what educational courses are on offer due to the rapid expansion (Evans, 1993). On a more positive note however, there is evidence that employers are keen to work with tourism educators in order to improve the situation (Peacock & Ladkin, 2002). A recent UK government paper on *The future of higher education* (Department for Education and Skills, 2003) indicates the wish to build stronger partnerships between higher education institutions and the Regional Development Agencies (Tribe, 2003). If tourism education is to provide a valuable starting point for the development of human capital, then greater dialogue between industry and education would be useful.

The second challenge for tourism employment is the perception and attractiveness of jobs in the industry. The positive aspects have been identified by Szivas et al. (2003) as glamour, the opportunity to travel, meeting people, foreign language use and task variety. However, Thomas and Townsend (2001) identify that tourism jobs often compare unfavourably with jobs in other sectors in terms of employment relations, seasonality, and part time characteristics. Low pay, long hours, low skills, and minimal training can be added to this list (Szivas et al., 2003). This reliance on untrained labour leads to poor quality of service, but the benefit for the industry is cheap and plentiful labour supply (Cooper et al., 1998). One of the consequences of a poor perception of jobs in tourism is the loss of tourism professionals to other sectors (Hjalager, 2003). The attitudes and motivations for choosing a career in tourism and the aspirations of those entering the industry is a research area that has received increasing amounts of attention (Petrova & Mason, 2004; Hjalager, 2003; Ross, 1997a, b; Airey & Frontistis, 1997), which adds to an understanding of what drives people to work in the tourism industry.

Conclusion

The subject area of careers and employment in the tourism industry is extensive, and the above discussion concentrates on those issues relevant to tourism education. Tourism education, at whatever level, forms the starting point for the development of human capital and for providing a trained workforce with appropriate skills to undertake the wide range of tourism jobs and professions. The popularity of tourism courses is undisputed, and those involved in the provision of tourism education have come a long way to raise the profile of the topic as an area of study, and to prove it is credible as an educational qualification. Of less certainty is what happens to individuals who enter the tourism workforce, and how

their skills are used and valued by the tourism industry. While there are enormous opportunities for employment in tourism, a lack of career development and the unattractiveness of some occupations remain a problem for those who choose tourism as a career route. Often the result is that many well educated and skilled individuals leave tourism for another sector. Furthermore, the tourism industry may also employ people with a variety of educational backgrounds, often completely un-related to tourism. This transferability of generic skills results in a difficulty to read tourism labour market signals. The tourism industry lacks distinct career paths and shares its labour markets with other segments. However, tourism as a service industry relies on the quality of its labour to develop and enhance the quality of the tourism product. An improved understanding of how best to educate and develop human capital would bring benefits to both individuals who wish to develop a career in tourism, and the tourism industry as a whole.

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